

VZCZCXYZ0002  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIL #0304/01 0421349  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 111349Z FEB 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1422  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 8995  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 4880  
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9638  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 6963  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0952  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 000304

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)  
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: FEBRUARY 11, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of the U.S. Special Envoy Holbrooke's meeting with senior Pakistani officials dominated headlines in all newspapers on Wednesday. All newspapers highlighted the report that "Pakistan and the U.S. agreed on a joint team to review the policy in the war on terror." Also highlighted on the front pages was President Barack Obama's statement that "al-Qaeda can't be allowed to operate in Pakistan save havens." In an exclusive story, the English daily, "The News," and its sister Urdu newspaper "Jang," reported that the "local Taliban leadership has decided to send their fighters to Islamabad as a reaction to the operations in Darra Adamkhel (FATA) and Swat valley." Likewise, some major newspapers reported that the "Taliban asked consumers in Swat valley not to pay electricity bills, and threatened the authorities not to cut power supply to the area."

All newspapers continued to run in-depth editorials on Ambassador Holbrooke's current visit to Pakistan and its possible impact on the region. The centrist national daily, "The News," observed that the "U.S. sees regional cooperation, between Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, as crucial to peace in the region. Pakistan must ensure it is not left stranded somewhere on the sidelines as this partnership is put in place." The Peshawar-based daily, "The Statesman," noted that "instead of receiving the daily dose of platitudes, the peace-loving section of humanity in the region would expect something new and positive from the special U.S. envoy." Toeing the line, the popular rightist daily, "Ausaf," wrote: "If the U.S. really wants to make Pakistani nation its friend, it will have to change the inhuman policies of the Bush Administration, and must halt use of military force against Pakistan." End Summary.

-----  
News Stories  
-----

"Pakistan, U.S. Agree On Joint Team For New Anti-Terrorism Policy"  
"Daily Times" (02/11)

"Pakistan and the U.S. agreed on Tuesday to set up a bipartisan 'inter-agency team' to improve coordination in intelligence-sharing, security and other affairs - in a bid to review the policy in the war on terror."

"'Safe Havens' Must Be Uprooted: Holbrooke; Qureshi Urges Talks With Reconcilable Elements" "Dawn" (02/11)

"U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard Holbrooke urged the Pakistani leadership on Tuesday to eliminate safe havens of terrorists in tribal areas and said the

Obama administration would fully support efforts for achieving the objective. The U.S. envoy met President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Army Chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and ISI's Director General Lt-Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha."

"Holbrooke Also Told About Negative Fallout Of Drone Attacks" "The News" (02/11)

".... Sources said that President Zardari raised the issue of drone attacks [during his meeting with Ambassador Holbrooke] and asked for ending them as they were proving counterproductive. He said development in Fata was necessary to deal with extremism."

"FATA Not Safe Haven For Terrorists: Asif" "The Post" (02/11)

"Reacting to the recent statement by U.S. President Barack Obama, President Asif Zardari in unequivocal terms has stated that tribal areas would not be allowed to become safe haven for terrorists and extremists. Pakistan has dismantled Al-Qaeda network and now they are hiding in mountains, he said while talking to U.S. Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke on Monday."

"Close Ties, But No Let-Up On Terror Issue: Obama" "Dawn" (02/11)

"U.S. President Barack Obama has said he has sent his special envoy Richard Holbrooke to Islamabad with a message that terrorists who threaten the United States also threaten Pakistan. In his first prime-time news conference as president, Mr. Obama sent forceful message to Pakistan: Washington seeks a closer relationship with Islamabad but there can be no compromise on the issue of terrorism."

"Pak-Afghan Policy To Be Reviewed: Obama" "The News" (02/11)

"President Barack Obama has ordered an interagency review to examine U.S. policy on Afghanistan and Pakistan before a NATO summit in April, the White House said on Tuesday. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the review would be carried out by Bruce Riedel, a former CIA officer."

"Taliban Threaten To Attack Islamabad" "The News" (02/11)

"The local Taliban leadership has decided to send its fighters to Islamabad as a reaction to the operations in Darra Adamkhel and Swat Valley and in this regard chalking on the walls of Islamabad are already appearing. Many religious scholars in Islamabad have also received messages from the Taliban that they have only two options, either to support the Taliban or leave the capital or they will be considered collaborators of the 'pro-American Zardari government' which, they claim, is not different from the previous Musharraf regime."

"Foreign Sleuths Supervise Operation In Peshawar" "The News" (02/11)

"As anger is mounting among the locals against the U.S. drone attacks in Pakistani territory, foreign sleuths reportedly supervised an operation in Gujjarabad - an urban town of the provincial capital - is yet another move to fuel the public fury, a source confided to 'The News' on Tuesday."

"U.S. Envoy Seeks Support For Journalist's Release" "Dawn" (02/11)

"U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke on Tuesday sought Pakistan's support for the release of New York Times journalist David Rhodes who has been kidnapped in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani assured the U.S. envoy of 'full support' in this regard. A statement issued by the Prime Minister House particularly mentioned the assurance extended by Mr. Gilani to Mr. Holbrooke. Interestingly, the Prime Minister House soon afterwards issued a revised press release expunging the part concerning the abducted journalist."

"Holbrooke Holds Out Assurance For Aafia's Early Release" "The Post" (02/11)

"Well-placed sources told 'Online' that Dr Fauzia Siddiqui also met

new U.S. special envoy on Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke.... She told that her sister Dr. Aafia Siddiqui was kept in U.S. prison despite being innocent. Richard Holbrooke held out an assurance to Dr. Fauzia Siddiqui to provide full justice to her sister Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, just investigation into her case and her early release."

"Afghanistan Must Not Be Allowed To Weaken Pakistan" "Daily times" (02/11)

"U.S. Senator John Kerry has said that strengthening the Pakistani democratic government must be a key part of the regional approach to curb militancy in the region, and Afghanistan should not be allowed to destabilize Islamabad."

"FATA Fighting May Displace 600,000: UN" "The Nation" (02/11)

"Fierce fighting in tribal areas could soon drive more than 600,000 people from their homes, the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) said on Tuesday. Spokesman Ron Redmond said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees will ramp up its relief work in northwestern Pakistan, where security has deteriorated sharply since last year."

"11 Militants Killed In Bajaur Operation" "The Nation" (02/11)

"Troops backed by helicopter gunships killed 11 rebels and pounded suspected militant hideouts in Bajaur, the military said on Tuesday."

"50 Taliban Killed In Fresh Swat Operation, Says NWFP Minister" "Daily Times" (02/11)

"Around 50 Taliban have been killed in the third phase of the ongoing military operation in Swat, NWFP Information Minister Iftikhar Hussain said on Tuesday."

"Taliban Ask Consumers To Stop Paying Power Bills" "The News" (02/11)

"One soldier was killed and 13 others, including two civilians, injured as security forces and militants clashed in different areas of the restive Swat Valley on Tuesday. Also, local Taliban have asked the residents of Malakand division not to pay electricity bills and threatened the WAPDA authorities not to cut power supply to the area."

"2 Drones Intrude Into Khyber Agency" "The News" (02/11)

"Two U.S. spy planes violated the Pak airspace and entered the limits of Landi Kotal tehsil at about 7 pm, which continued flying for about half an hour on Tuesday evening."

"Rift In Pakistan Government Sealed Pole's Fate" "Dawn" (02/11)

"Internal divisions within Pakistan's government apparatus hampered efforts to save the life of a Polish hostage beheaded by Taliban militants, Poland's Foreign Minister said on Tuesday."

"Engineer's Killing Yet To Be Verified, Says Qureshi" "Dawn" (02/11)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Tuesday said the reported beheading of the kidnapped Polish geologist Piotr Stanczak was yet to be verified, but if the reports were correct, the barbaric act should be condemned in strongest possible terms, the Minister said at a press conference."

"'Al Qaeda Video' Warns India Of More Attacks" "Dawn" (02/11)

"A senior Al Qaeda leader, who was claimed to have been killed last year, has resurfaced to warn India of swift retribution if it attacked Pakistan, but Indian officials said on Tuesday the threat, conveyed on a video through the BBC, was not new and in any case New Delhi was prepared to meet the challenge."

-----  
"Holbrooke Visit," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/11)

"Islamabad must then focus on the economic aid plan. Of the current options available, this would best suit its interests. It must also, putting doubts aside, focus on building a relationship with Mr. Holbrooke and his team. The U.S. sees regional cooperation, between Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, as crucial to peace in the region. Pakistan must ensure it is not left stranded somewhere on the sidelines as this partnership is put in place."

"Holbrook's Fears," an editorial in the Peshawar-based independent regional daily "The Statesman" (cir. 3,000) (02/11)

"Instead of receiving the daily dose of platitudes, the peace-loving section of humanity in the region would expect something new and positive from the special U.S. envoy."

"U.S. Indication To Review Policy On Pakistan And Afghanistan," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (02/11)

"If the United States really wants to make Pakistani nation its friend, it will have to change its inhuman policies of the Bush Administration, and must discontinue military force against Pakistan. Instead, the U.S. should support Pakistan economically and assume more humane policies or else this fire will take the entire region into its fold."

"Mr. Holbrooke And Ground Realities," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (02/11)

"Unfortunately the Bush Administration never bothered to consider the ground realities while making decisions about this part of the world. Nevertheless, the Obama administration has signaled to revisit the U.S. policies and as such it must understand that any steps that increase difficulties for Pakistan are contrary to the mutual interests."

"Appointment Of Western Diplomats And Our Joint Responsibilities," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (02/11)

"We must not overlook the fact that both the United States and Britain haven't appointed their special envoys just for the sake of pleasure, but in fact these countries will choose their future course in the light of findings of these diplomats. Therefore, it is essential for the Pakistani government and the representatives of all walks of the society to enlighten these diplomats with the ground realities and the compulsions of Pakistan, as their reports will decide whether or not the U.S. and U.K. will continue cooperation in different fields of life or not."

"Awareness Of Ground Realities, And Vow To Renew Friendship," an editorial in the Lahore-based Urdu daily "Waqt" (circ. 5000) (02/11)

"If President Obama's Special Representative wants to understand the ground realities of South Asia, he must also consider that along with military operation, reconciliation and compromise cannot be ignored in order to have peace, and to eliminate terrorism. Otherwise the war in Afghanistan and in Pakistan's tribal areas cannot be won."

"Obama's Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke's Visit To Pakistan," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (circ. 5000) (02/11)

"While briefing Mr. Holbrooke, our officials should convince him that the only way to remove the grave threats to the U.S. and its national security is for the U.S. to concentrate on restoring its economy, and to avoid unnecessary expenditure on Iraq and Afghanistan by extricating itself from the so called global war on terror as soon as possible."

"Removing Safe Havens," an editorial in the center-right national

English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/11)

"The contacts between the U.S. and Pakistan should be utilized to bring home to the Americans that the eagerness to go ahead with achieving their objective by launching drone attacks is not proving helpful. On the contrary, they are creating anti-U.S. feelings and making the task of Pakistan harder.... The failure of military means so far should convince it of the primacy of these factors in winning the hearts and minds of the people."

"Tribal Areas; Obama's Stand And Pakistan's National Interests," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (02/11)

"President Barack Obama's news conference further confirmed the new U.S. administration's intent that it is going to be spending all energies on Afghanistan. The possibility of [U.S.] launching ground attack on Pakistan on the pretext of operation in the tribal areas cannot be ruled out.... Expecting anything from America and considering its war as ours would be imprudent.... It would be better to apprise Holbrooke about ground realities instead of dishing out more assurance to him."

"Uncle Sam's Threats And Packs Of Jokers," an op-ed by Shireen M. Mazari in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/11)

"Holbrooke has the gall to declare that he is in Pakistan to renew U.S. 'commitment and friendship with the people of Pakistan.' Mr. Holbrooke, the U.S. has never had a commitment to the Pakistani nation - only to its own goals here and to its handpicked leaders, both in uniform and in civvies. As for friendship, only the U.S. would define this in terms of killings, which is what they are doing to the Pakistani people. If the U.S. really wanted to show a positive commitment to the people of Pakistan, they would stop the drone attacks, allow our state to dialogue with all its stake holders, desist from strategic arrangements with India that have a direct fallout on Pakistan, stop destabilizing Pakistan by using its territory to target the Iranian state, and accept our differing perspective on critical issues including proliferation and Dr. Khan."

"Fixing Afghanistan," an op-ed by Nasim Zehra in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/11)

"As Holbrooke treads the soil of our region and acknowledges that his country has never faced a more complex problem than working for peace and security in Afghanistan, he must be humbled by the blunders Washington has committed. And perhaps continues to commit. Holbrooke's task is to make his team in Washington to abandon the failed ways of working policy in Afghanistan."

"Taliban-Like Terrorists Created By RAW, Mossad And CIA," an editorial note in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (circ. 5000) (02/11)

"It has now been proven that some anti-state, anti-peace elements posing as the Taliban, are destroying important national facilities in some important cities in the tribal areas and the NWFP like Bannu, Swat, Hangu, Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan by using the latest foreign weapons. These anti-state and anti-peace Taliban-like elements include saboteurs, agents and terrorists of the Mossad, RAW, CIA and pro-Karzai Northern Alliance. It is imperative to investigate how these weapons reached the local people. Huge caches of U.S., western, Israeli and Indian weapons are also helping these elements carry out their terrorist activities in the tribal areas."

"Battle For Hearts And Minds," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (02/11)

"We strongly believe that terrorism in this region is to a great extent the unwanted by-product of indigenous struggle for freedom in Kashmir and Afghans' inborn detestation for foreign occupation of their land. Rightly then, the foreign minister's assertion that in the 'battle for people's hearts and minds the power of persuasion must be stronger than the effects of coercion, and an inclusive process must include dialogue and reconciliation.'"

"U.S. Support To India Exposed," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (02/11)

"The Mumbai attacks have exposed the U.S. role in the diplomatic drive against Pakistan. The U.S. Ambassador Patterson met Prime Minister Gilani immediately after the extraordinary meeting of the Defense Committee of the Federal Cabinet. Though the Media Center of the PM House refrained from telling anything about this meeting, however the media sources claimed that the U.S. Ambassador demanded to take action against the perpetrators of Mumbai attacks if they are from Pakistan. This approach demonstrates that the U.S. has become a party on this issue."

"Response To Mumbai," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/11)

"In legal matters, patience is not just a virtue, it is the bedrock of justice. However, Prosecution of the Mumbai suspects will only bring partial closure to the Mumbai issue. The second half is political and will depend on Pakistan's commitment to shutting down militant networks that operate here. This is where the issue becomes murkier. The government has locked some offices of the Jamaatud Dawa and curbed the movement of a few of its leaders but it is still not clear if a full-scale closure is in the offing."

"Trading Dossiers," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/11)

"If India truly wants Pakistan to conduct an investigation it cannot expect it to do so blindfold and with one hand tied behind its back. Pakistan for its part needs to do a reality check. The attackers were Pakistani by origin but most unlikely to be acting at the behest of the state."

"Ball In India's Court," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/11)

"If the ministerial duo is certain about the involvement of particular individuals in the Mumbai terror attacks, they should ask their government to immediately share this secret with Pakistan, rather than confusing the situation."

"Pakistan's Response," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (02/11)

"Unfortunately, India suspects Pakistan's sincere pledge to bring the Mumbai blasts' culprits to book. Delhi's lack of trust in Pakistan's efforts to tackle terrorism and its unusual troop movements on the international border resulted in the heightening of tension.... The Indian government should have trust in Pakistan's government's efforts to bring the culprits to book. In this regard the Defence Committee of the Cabinet deliberations and decisions will help achieve the desired results."

"Suspended Freedoms," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/11)

"Moving beyond the controversy surrounding Dr. Qadeer, we need to stick to some kind of principle. The irrefutable fact is that treating any citizen in this manner is illegal and grossly unjust.... The government must either grant Dr. Qadeer liberty or begin a proper process of trial. Secret agreements, covert deals and other attempts to hide the truth will only add to the complications."

"A Closed Chapter?," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/11)

"The Islamabad High Court on Friday set Dr. Khan free because it felt that his network had been rendered ineffective.... But unfortunately, his release had set alarm bells ringing in western capitals. U.S. officials have sharply objected to the IHC decision. It seems that the government has succumbed to this pressure and placed curbs that include restrictions on his movement."

"Do not accept any pressure on Dr. Khan issue," an editorial in the Karachi based left-wing Sindhi Daily "Awami Awaz" (Cir. 70,000)

(02/11)

"We believe that Dr A.Q. Khan's issue is an internal matter of Pakistan, and no other country should be allowed to mess around with it. When the U.S. raises questions about Dr. Khan, Pakistani government must let the U.S. know that Pakistan's demands for stopping the drone attacks had gone unheard. The government must not accept any external pressure on this issue, and should not restrict Dr. Khan's freedom."

Patterson